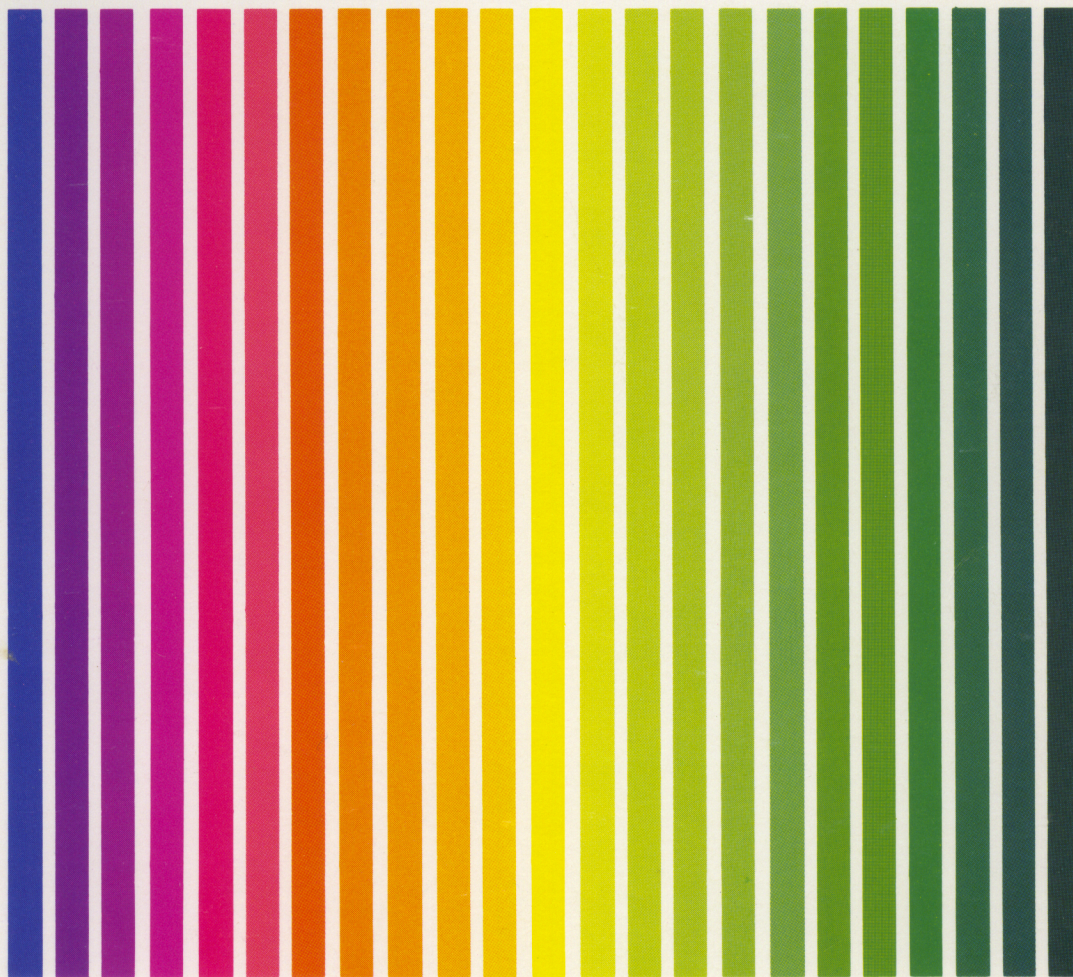# APX

ATARI® PROGRAM EXCHANGE

William Zimmerman

BLACKJACK CASINO

APX-10064 APX-20064

User-Written Software for ATARI Home Computers

William Zimmerman

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BLACKJACK CASINO

by

William B. Zimmerman

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

BLACKJACK CASINO conforms to the standard game of Blackjack, for many years a worldwide favorite. But BLACKJACK CASINO also lets you double down when you have fewer than 12 points, split pairs (in games of one or two players), and take insurance when the dealer's face-up card is an ace. In addition, it uses the five-card Charlie rule (any player holding five cards without exceeding 21 automatically wins against the dealer).

You use your joystick controller to enter your initial stake, your bet, and all your playing decisions. You can restart the game at any time and, should you be so unfortunate as to require more money, you can add money to your stake during the game. Depending on their luck and skill, players will come and go, but the dealer is blessed with unlimited funds, and BLACKJACK CASINO will provide unlimited hours of entertainment!

REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

Cassette version
  8K RAM
  ATARI 410 Program Recorder

Diskette version
  24K RAM
  ATARI 810 Disk Drive

One ATARI Joystick Controller per player

CONTACTING THE AUTHOR

Users wishing to contact the author about BLACKJACK CASINO may write to him at:

        5904 S. Logan Street
        Littleton, CO 80121

GETTING STARTED

LOADING BLACKJACK CASINO INTO COMPUTER MEMORY

1. Remove any program cartridges from the (Left Cartridge) slot of your computer.

2. Plug one joystick controller per player into the controller jacks at the front of the computer, starting with the leftmost jack.

3. If you have the cassette version of BLACKJACK CASINO:

    a. Have your computer turned OFF.

    b. Insert the BLACKJACK CASINO cassette into the program recorder's cassette holder and press REWIND on the recorder until the tape rewinds completely. Then press PLAY to prepare the program recorder for loading the program.

    c. Turn on the computer while holding down the START key.

    d. When you hear a beep, release the START key and press the L key (for "luck"). The program will load into computer memory and start automatically.

If you have the diskette version of BLACKJACK CASINO:

    a. Have your computer turned OFF.

    b. Turn on your disk drive.

    c. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the BLACKJACK CASINO diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you. (Use disk drive one if you have more than one drive.)

    d. Turn on your computer and your TV set. The program will load into computer memory and start automatically.

FIRST DISPLAY SCREEN

When the program has loaded into computer memory, the screen displays a summary of game rules and joystick movements, along with a prompt to type in the first player's name:

```
        ATARI BLACKJACK CASINO

DEALER HITS SOFT 17        $300 LIMIT
INSURANCE PAYS DOUBLE    5 CARDS WIN

BET -> * 100    SURRENDER -> * DOUBLE
      25  +  1                NO  +  YES
          5                      SPLIT

Please enter your name then press RETURN
--------
```

Figure 1 First Display Screen

TYPING IN PLAYER'S NAMES

Type in the first player's name (up to eight letters) and press the RETURN key. (You can correct mistakes with the DELETE/BACK S key anytime before pressing the RETURN key.) Then press the SELECT key for each additional player (up to four can play at a time) and type in a name in response to the program's prompt.

PLAYING BLACKJACK CASINO

STARTING THE PROGRAM AND ENTERING STAKES

When you're ready to have the dealer deal the first hand, press the START key and enter
your stake. A message, USE JOYSTICK TO ENTER YOUR STAKE displays, along with a prompt
STAKE? next to each player's name. Each player uses his joystick to specify his stake.
The joystick movements correspond to these money decisions:

```
                              100
                               ^
             Unbet ->x         |
                               |
                               |
                25 <---- ----> 1
                               |
                               |
                               |
                               v
                               5
```
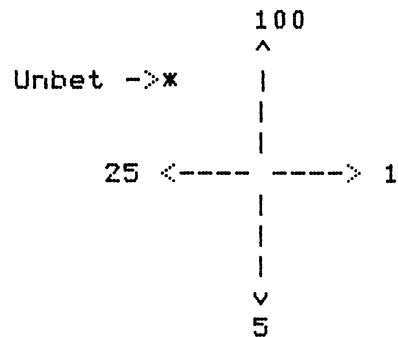
Figure 2   Joystick Movements for Money Decisions

When the message STAKE? displays next to your name, enter any of the decisions in
Figure 2. Push the joystick repeatedly and in as many directions as necessary to indicate
your desired stake.

Press the red trigger button to cancel the last increment of your stake. Press the
trigger button twice to cancel your entire stake.

USING BLACKJACK CASINO

PLACING YOUR BETS

After each player enters his stake, the dealer automatically shuffles the deck (the message SHUFFLING flashes during this time). Then the first display screen redisplays with a BETS? prompt next to each player's name. Each player uses his joystick to place his bet in the same way he indicated his stake. Initial bets have a $300 limit. In addition, you can't bet more money than you have in your stake! Doubling down and splitting pairs may result in higher bets if your stake permits.

PLAYING YOUR HAND

After a brief period, the dealer automatically displays his hand at the top of the screen and each player's hand below. The dealer then asks each player whether he wants to be hit (add another card to his hand). The prompt HIT? displays next to the player's name. Players use the joystick to enter a decision. The joystick movements correspond to these card playing decisions:

```
                    Double down
                         ^
      Surrender->x       |
                         |
                         |
          No <----  ----> Yes
                         |
                         |
                         |
                         v
                       Split
```
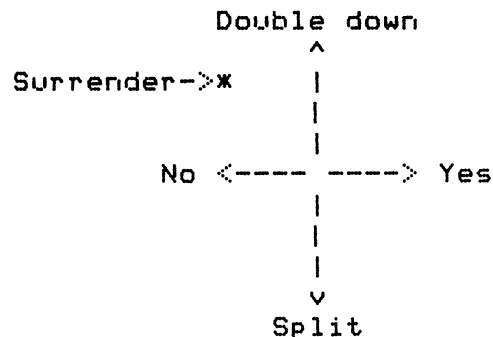
Figure 3 Joystick Movements for Play Decisions

You may make any of the play decisions shown in Figure 3. However, after taking your first hit in any hand, you may respond only with NO and YES for the remainder of the hand.

While cards display on the TV screen, you can press the SPACE BAR on the computer keyboard to review briefly the first display screen of game rules and joystick movements.

STARTING OVER AND INCREASING YOUR STAKE

If, during the game, you wish to start over again, press the START key. To add money to your stake, press the SELECT key. In both cases, the program responds after the current hand is completed.

If you're already familiar with Blackjack game rules, skip over the next section and go on to the Casino Options.

BLACKJACK RULES OF PLAY

1. The cards are shuffled.

2. The player places a bet.

3. The dealer (the computer) deals two cards to each player and two cards to himself, one being face down.

4. Each player evaluates his hand. Each face card counts 10 points. Aces count 1 or 11. All other cards count their face value. If you have a 21 count on the first two cards, you have a Blackjack and the dealer pays you one and a half times your bet.

5. The dealer evaluates his cards. If he has 21, he'll turn over his face-down card and collect bets from players whose two-card total is less than 21.

6. If the dealer doesn't have 21, he asks each player if the player wants additional cards (HITS). Your object is to win your bet. If your total count exceeds 21, you lose. You win if, after you and the dealer have taken the additional cards desired, your count exceeds that of the dealer but is less than 22.

7. The dealer takes additional cards according to fixed rules. If his count is 16 or less, he takes a hit. If his count is 17 or more, he stands (takes no more cards). If he has a "soft 17" (one with an ace counting 11), he takes a hit.

8. If the dealer's count exceeds 21 (BUST), all remaining players win. Otherwise, all remaining players win whose count exceeds the dealer's.

9. The dealer reshuffles the deck as necessary and deals another hand.

CASINO OPTIONS

Double down

If you have less than 12 points, you may double your bet and receive one face-down card. The card is turned over after the hand is finished to determine the winner.

Split pairs

Pair splitting is allowed only in one- or two-player games. If the dealer deals you a pair (face cards are all considered tens when determining pairs), you may split the pair and make a bet equal to the original on your second hand. You then play the resulting two hands in the usual way. (Note. A Blackjack occurring after a split counts as 21; it doesn't receive the bonus (1 1/2 times the bet) payoff.)

Insurance

When the dealer's face-up card is an ace, you're offered the opportunity to insure your bet against a possible dealer Blackjack. This is a side bet that the dealer has 21, which pays 2 to 1. If the dealer does have 21, you keep your bet and get back the insurance money. If he doesn't have 21, you lose the insurance money and the play of the hand continues.

Five-card Charlie

Any player receiving five cards without going over 21 wins!

Surrender

If, after looking at your first two cards and the dealer's face-up card, you decide you can't win, you may throw in your hand (SURRENDER) and lose half your bet.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY

Blackjack systems abound. The latest systems involve counting cards, with emphasis on the number of face cards (joker, queen, and king) that have been played. Whether these systems have produced winning Blackjack players or confused losers is subject to conjecture. Below is a simple, effective strategy guaranteed not to lose you a fortune if you apply it judiciously.

TAKING HITS

1. If the dealer shows 6 or less, you stand on 12 or more.
2. If the dealer shows 7 or more, you stand on 17 or more.

DOUBLE DOWN

1. If you have 11, always double down.
2. If you have 10, double down when the dealer shows 9 or less.
3. If you have 9, double down when the dealer shows 5 or 6.

SPLITTING PAIRS

1. Never split 4's, 5's, or 10's.
2. Split 9's if the dealer shows 8 or less.
3. Split 8's if the dealer shows 7 or less.
4. Split 7's if the dealer shows 5 or 6.
5. Split 6's if the dealer shows a 6.
6. Split 2's and 3's if the dealer shows 4, 5, or 6.

INSURANCE

If you've been watching for face cards and have noted their absence, take insurance. Otherwise, forget it. Insurance is a separate bet and has no bearing on whether you have a good hand.

SURRENDER

Don't surrender! If you feel like a loser, it may be past your bedtime.

BETTING

If you've noticed relatively few face cards, increasing the size of your bets slightly might be advantageous. This is the basis of the card counting systems. The practice of reshuffling the deck early and the temptation to bet wildly negate this supposed advantage.

FURTHER READING

A visit to your local public library will introduce you to a variety of playing
strategies. Beware of sure-fire systems! The house <u>always</u> has the advantage.

```
* * * G O O D   L U C K * * *
* * *         A T       * * *
* * * B L A C K J A C K * * *
* * * * C A S I N O ! * * * *
```

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ATARI PROGRAM EXCHANGE

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1. Name and APX number of program _____

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

_____

_____

_____

3. What do you especially like about this program?

_____

_____

_____

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

_____

_____

_____

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate and/or comprehensive?

_____

_____

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program?

_____ Easy to use
_____ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
_____ Enjoyable
_____ Self-instructive
_____ Useful (non-game software)
_____ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please give page numbers).

_____

_____

_____

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

_____

_____

_____

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

_____

_____

_____

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

_____

_____

11. Other comments about the software or user instructions:

_____

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ATARI Program Exchange
P.O. Box 427
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Sunnyvale, CA 94086

[seal here]